

Washington, DC- Today Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez (D-CA) made the following statement on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in strong opposition to H.R. 4437, the “Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005.”

“Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition of H.R. 4437.

“Americans are right to demand better border security and better enforcement of our immigration laws. But this bill is just a false sense of security—it does not secure our borders, and leaves our ports of entry exposed, and does nothing to reform our broken immigration system. What is needed is enforcement of laws that work and we can’t have this without comprehensive immigration reform. Even the President agrees with this!

“We should not be debating a bill thrown together at the eleventh hour before we adjourn for recess. A bill that basically opens the door for witch-hunts of anyone who looks foreign and that erodes basic civil liberties and human rights of migrants, legal immigrants, and citizens.

“In looking at the lack of merit in this bill, we need to ask ourselves what kind of America we want: Do we want an America where we have mass deportations? Do we want an America where police officers can randomly ask foreign-looking Americans to produce identification to prove their legal status? Do we want an America where people can be detained for life when their home country is unwilling to take them back? Do we want an America where Americans will have to carry national identification cards to travel, work or just walk down the street? Do we want an America that criminalizes 1.6 million children? Because that’s what this bill will do.

“As the daughter of immigrants, I am offended by this bill. I ask my colleagues to think long-and-hard about the vote they are about to cast and the detrimental impact it will have on the proud tradition of immigration that this country was built on.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.”